1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

In one instance there had been intermarriage with Sinhalese, and we suspected this in other cases, though the majority appear to be reasonably pure-blooded.

These people make chenas[1] on which they live temporarily in bark-covered huts; Plate X, figure 1, represents the chena settlement of the local group of the Namadewa *warige*, some of the members of which are shown in Plate X, figure 2. They gather honey and hunt, several of them possess guns, and some of them rear cattle for the Sinhalese villagers. Indeed, for Veddas their lot is singularly happy, since they live in the heart of the park country where game is still abundant. Bailey first induced some Veddas in the Nilgala district to make chenas about the middle of the last century, before which all the Veddas in this district were probably living their natural hunting, honey-gathering life.

It is not often that a community that has taken to the semi-civilised life of chena cultivation is seen, in which its members are so healthy and well fed, for Veddas dislike settling down and do not generally do so until they find they can no longer subsist on the game in the country, when they either drift into Sinhalese settlements, or make extremely rough chenas for themselves, the produce of which is seldom sufficient to feed the community. Besides which, as is the case with the Sinhalese peasants themselves, the crop is often pledged to Moormen pedlars before it is reaped. The poor Veddas then subsist as best they can on yams, honey and berries, and usually fall a prey to fever. Several Veddas in this wretched condition were seen between Namal Oya and Bandaraduwa, while those at Godatalawa were scarcely better off.

In the Nilgala district the conditions are different. Chena making and cattle rearing had been introduced while game was still abundant, families are still able to leave the chena settlement and hunt and gather honey, living during such times in rock shelters within their own hunting boundary. However, the

[1] Bailey defines a chena as "a patch of ground cleared from the forest for cultivation. The jungle is burnt down, a crop taken off, and then suffered to grow up again: it is recleared again after intervals of from five to ten years," *Trans. Ethnol. Soc. N.S.* Vol. II, 1863, p. 282.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Veddas are coming more and more in contact with their Sinhalese neighbours, and it is extremely unlikely that the next generation will remain pure.

We visited two of the nearest chena settlements of these people, the huts (Plate X, figure 1) were about as well built as those of the average Sinhalese chena, though the cultivation itself was certainly less systematic and orderly. The Namadewa folk lived in one settlement while the Morane and Unapane inhabited another.

Although all these Veddas have come in contact with the Sinhalese and are visited by Moormen hawkers for trade purposes—as indeed even the wildest have been for many generations—they have retained their old custom of not allowing the stranger in the midst of their settlement where he might meet their women. A rough shelter had been built at one corner of the Namadewa chena in which the pedlars sat and waited until the Vedda men came to bargain with them. Hence in the main these people have retained their old virtues of truthfulness, chastity and courtesy. The first, upon which practically every observer has remarked, was modified in a particular direction, for they all wished to show that they were pure-blooded Veddas of the Morane and Unapane clans, which were considered superior to the rest. So the Namadewa men lied freely, declaring that they belonged to Morane and Unapane, and one young man, otherwise a good informant, insisted that he was still unmarried, as he did not want to own that his wife was a Namadewa woman. Cases of intermarriage with Sinhalese were also emphatically denied, or only admitted after much cross-examination. Plate III represents a number of the men we met at Bendiyagalge.

Danigala. The Danigala Veddas of the Nilgala district present a peculiar phase of the clash of civilization and barbarism. They are the classical "wild Veddas" of Ceylon described by so many travellers; their descent is pure but their own customs have been almost entirely forgotten, and are certainly ignored at the present day. They live in the park country, have a chena and a banana garden, and do a good trade in cattle both by herding for the Sinhalese, retaining every fifth calf as is the

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

custom of the country and also selling those they have bred themselves. However, all this was unknown to us when we first met the people, nor would it have been possible to guess their prosperous condition from the first sight of their settlement. It was well known throughout the Vedirata that investigations were about to be made among the Veddas, and all the village headmen had been given instructions to render assistance. They therefore told the Veddas to expect us, and would have sent for them to come to the Public Works Department bungalow on our arrival had we not expressly stated that we preferred to visit the people in their homes. A very rough track led to the top of the Danigala Hill, about 1200 feet high, where, on a rounded shoulder of rock, stood the skeleton hut of the Danigala Veddas shown in Plate II. This was built on the pattern of the ordinary village Vedda habitations but entirely lacked the slats of bark which make the sides moderately weather proof. By its side was an even rougher shelter consisting of a large bough with the smaller branches trimmed and overlaid with banana leaves. Kaira the patriarch or "senior" of the group sat outside the hut with three other men; there were also present three women, a boy of about 12, and two younger children, and although both of the latter had many teeth they suckled persistently. This hut and some of its occupants are shown in Plate II, the rough shelter by its side in Plate XI, figure 1.

Although Mr Bibile, whom all these people knew quite well, was with us, they were quite apathetic, their attitude was clearly not the result of shyness, but simply due to the fact that they took no interest in our presence; the women continued to suckle their infants and the men squatted or lay upon the rocks and chewed in gloomy silence, and when addressed they grunted "yes" or "no." One of the infants who smiled and cooed and tried to gain our attention was the only member of the group who seemed to take the least notice of us. Kaira told us that the people we now saw represented all that remained of the Danigala Veddas. We noticed some bananas (which do not grow wild in Ceylon) on the further side of the ridge and we asked to see their plantation. A prompt denial of its existence was the result, though Kaira afterwards told Mr Bibile that he

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

would show him his chena but that he did not wish the white people to know anything about it. Further talk with these people showed that it was impossible to obtain reliable information from them, they had been utterly spoilt as the result of being frequently interviewed by travellers.

The Veddas have long been regarded as a curiosity in Ceylon and excite almost as much interest as the ruined cities, hence Europeans go to the nearest Rest House on the main road and have the Danigala Veddas brought to them. Naturally the Veddas felt uncomfortable and shy at first, but when they found that they had only to look gruff and grunt replies in order to receive presents they were quite clever enough to keep up the pose. In this they were aided by the always agreeable villagers ever ready to give the white man exactly what he wanted. The white man appeared to be immensely anxious to see a true Vedda, a wild man of the woods, clad only in a scanty loin cloth, carrying his bow and arrows on which he depended for his subsistence, simple and untrained, indeed, little removed from the very animals he hunted. What more easy than to produce him? The Nilgala headman sends word when strangers are expected, then the Veddas repair to their very striking hut on the rock dome and often post a look-out on a big rock about half way up, for on our second visit the leading man of our party who was carrying the camera stated that he saw a Vedda bolting from this rock as we came up. These folk, who when we saw them wore their Vedda loin cloths and were smeared with ashes, are reported to wear ordinary Sinhalese clothes when not in their professional pose, and Mr Bibile, who has himself seen one or more of them in sarongs, points out that the imposture is kept up for two main reasons; firstly, they fear that their cultivation might be stopped (evidently an echo of the chena difficulty of the Eastern Province), or that they might be taxed if they did not appear to be poor fellows living on hardly won jungle produce; secondly, their pose of poverty interests strangers and procures them visitors, whose generosity is the greater the more primitive their mode of life appears to be.

As a matter of fact the Danigala Veddas like those of Henebedda (with whom we became really friendly) keep cattle

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX8 Vedda AX8

for the Sinhalese of Potuliyadde, receiving every fifth calf that is born. The community has, or recently had, ten or more head of cattle of their own and have sold bulls to the brother-in-law of our *tavalam*[1] leader for as much as 30 Rs., indeed, our *tavalam* leader stated that he had himself visited the Danigala chena and had also seen the cattle. On this occasion Kaira and his sons wore a coloured cloth as the Sinhalese do and their women wore a *hambaya* and coloured breast handkerchief. Mr Bibile was able to confirm some of these statements from his own knowledge and on making investigations among the local villagers discovered that there was a whole community living on the chena settlement, some of whom had married Sinhalese. Indeed it appeared that not only have members of this community learnt to play the part of professional primitive man, but there has even been specialisation, for as far as we could learn, the men we met at the look-out hut are those who always receive visitors or come to Bibile when sent for, while the others whom we did not see do not pose as wild Veddas. Probably the part they now play had only recently crystallised into a professional rôle, but it must be remembered that so long ago as 1863 Bailey discussing these Veddas, or their fathers, says "they were brought in from the forests to be 'looked at'" and he adds, "I never saw that contempt for money which Tennant supposes is still existing[2]."

Kovil Vanamai. In the Eastern Province in the neighbourhood of Devulani tank the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are found, this term being applied to a number of groups of Veddas living in this neighbourhood. The name Kovil Vanamai means temple precincts and seems to have arisen from there being one or more temples in this part of the country, while some of these shrines are traditionally associated with Veddas, apparently with old settled coast and village Veddas, for we have no reason to think that the ancestors of the folk we saw at Bandaraduwa, or the other wilder Veddas of fifty years ago, were in any way guardians of the temples or dependent on their bounty. Although at the present day the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are represented by scattered groups, for the most part

[1] A *tavalam* is a train of pack bulls.

[2] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 285.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

months previously to wander into Tamankaduwa where they hoped to get yams and perhaps some game. A number of women left the village immediately after our arrival, explaining that if they did not go and find some yams they and their children would get nothing to eat that night. Some of the men possessed bows and arrows but game was scarce, and their living was obviously precarious, yams, monitor lizards, honey and berries forming their staple diet. Fowls were kept and were taken down to the road (10 miles distant) to sell. Like all Veddas they possessed dogs, invaluable to them in catching monitor lizards when there is no bigger game to hunt, and their care for them was shown by a small shelter which they had built in order to shade a bitch with a litter of puppies.

In physical characters these Veddas[1] somewhat resembled the neighbouring Sinhalese, but were less stoutly built; this appearance may however in part have been due to malnutrition. Their headman is a short, well-nourished, exceedingly active and intelligent individual, whose only Vedda characteristic is his short stature. Plate XIV, figure 2, represents a number of Omuni women.

Unuwatura Bubula. The position of the Unuwatura Bubula Veddas is extremely difficult to understand, they occupy two small groups of huts (one of which is shown in Plate XV, figure 1) a little distance from the huts of some peasant Sinhalese. They formerly lived at Mudugala and have doubtless been in close contact with the Sinhalese for many generations, but whether they are the remains of village Vedda settlements or are settled wild Veddas cannot be stated with certainty, though the latter seems more probable. It must be explained that though this community has mixed much with the Sinhalese and has doubtless been much influenced by them, they have their own shamans and they perform their own rites quite apart from their Sinhalese neighbours. Unfortunately the shaman of these people who knew most about the customs and rites of this community was ill, having overtaxed his strength at the first ceremony performed for us, and was not able to talk much, but he was present at most of our conversations and was thus a check on the younger man, but for the reason indicated many

[1] [i.e., Veddas of Omuni. – Analyst]

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

423 The care with which the seclusion of the rock-shelter is still maintained probably belongs to a different category of ideas, and is an example of the jealousy with which Vedda women are guarded.

423 627 At Sitala Wanniya we heard of the following method of settling disputes concerning boundaries, though Handuna my informant had never known of any example of a difficulty of this kind arising, and had only heard of the method of settling them from his father and father-in-law. When two Veddas, or groups of Veddas, are not satisfied as to the position of a boundary, the disputants each bring their "seisin" stone to the land over which the quarrel has arisen. Here the stones are placed in pots upon supports of the kind used in the Nae Yaku ceremony at Bandaraduwa (Plate XXXVI, figure 1). When this has been done the disputants invoke certain spiritual agencies, but who these are my informants could not tell me. As a result of this, a wild animal, usually an elephant, would come and destroy the pot set up by the party wrongfully claiming the tract of land.

231 431 Every Vedda has one or two dogs with which he does not readily part, though with characteristic generosity he is ever willing to give away pups to any of his friends or relatives. Vedda dogs are invariably well fed and well treated, and it was clear that the warmest feelings exist between a man and his dogs. As evidence of the importance of dogs in the community we may cite their use as wedding gifts and refer to the process of anointing them with a part of the offering dedicated to the *yaku* described in Chapter VI. Bailey's account of the relation of Vedda dogs to their masters brings out so much of this feeling that it is quoted here at length. "They have dogs perfectly trained to follow up and pull down the wounded deer. These they value highly; but they are of no distinct breed and do not differ from the ordinary country dogs. But it would appear that at a time when hunting was of more importance to them than it is now, the dog was more valued....

"But dogs are still prized by the Veddah. Of all his 231 possessions he values most his bow, which is placed under his 435 head when he sleeps; and next in his estimation is the dog who

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

guards it, sleeping always at his master's head. 'What would you do,' I asked a Veddah once, 'if your bow were stolen?' 'No one could steal it,' he replied, 'the dog would not let him.' 'But if anyone killed your dog?' His answer was significant. He clutched his axe, and made a motion as though he would cut down the man who did so.

"And this was no idle threat. In 1849, a Bintenne Veddah deliberately knocked a man's brains out for having, as he believed, killed two of his dogs by magic[1]. He never attempted to deny what he had done. 'It is true,' he said at the coroner's inquest, 'I killed him, and I did so because he had killed, by witchcraft, the two dogs I had reared and hunted for my support[2].'"

The following is a list of the names of dogs and bitches obtained from the Henebedda Veddas:

Dogs. Kapura, Kadiya (*kadi*, black ant), Muranduwa (obstinate), Hudena (white), Pandina (spotty), Dimbula, Boriya, Taniya, Tambula, Senba, Katakaluwa (black mouth), Bahira, Pulana, Kambiliya, Komiya (a Sinhalese corruption of "come here," the name of a dog belonging to the Korale of Nilgala).

Bitches. Pandi (spotty), Katakalu (black mouth), Handani (white), Dassi (clever), Dimbile, Makedi (like iron), Bosari, Hudu Valli, Mukulu.

The following list represents the usual property of an elderly Vedda, that is, of one of the influential men of the group, and actually records the property of Poromala (Walaha) the "senior" of the Henebedda Veddas; one axe, bow and arrows, three pots, a deerskin, a "flint and steel" and supply of tinder, a gourd for carrying water, a betel pouch containing betel cutters and some form of vessel or small box, perhaps of metal (e.g. an old brass covered cartridge case), for holding lime. Most Veddas also possess a certain amount of cloth besides that actually in use on their person, and Handuna was no exception to this rule.

Kaira of Henebedda had only two pots, but otherwise the list of his property is identical with that already given. Handuna

[1] "The murdered man was not a Veddah, but a low-country vagrant; several of whom have of late years, taken up their abode near the Bintenne Veddahs, to their great annoyance."

[2] Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 286—287.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Mangara Deyo is invoked to protect cattle. About a month before our visit a nephew of the shaman suffered from headache and fever and woke up in the middle of the night in a great state of alarm. It was ascertained by stone augury that Mangara Deyo had sent the sickness, offerings were made to him, and the youngster speedily recovered.

There are no dances at a man's death or invocations to the spirits of the dead, nor did there appear to be any particular spirit who gave luck in hunting, indeed it seemed that game was little sought, the whole activity of the community being concentrated on cattle breeding.

The temple of Mangara Deyo is a small bare hut, with the roof projecting a few feet beyond that wall in which the door is cut. The inside of the temple is quite bare except for a narrow wooden rack about a foot wide which runs round the two side and back walls at a height of about four feet from the ground. In one corner of this was a pile of *aude* of all shapes and sizes which were said to belong to Mangara Deyo.

ROTAWAEWA.

Mr G. W. Jayawardene writes as follows concerning the beliefs of the Tamankaduwa "Veddas" described on p. 56. "They regard Adukganna Hulawali Yaka and Vedi Yaka as the important *yaku*. Adukganna Hulawali Yaka is the spirit to whom they look to be cured of sickness. When any one is ill he or she or someone on their behalf puts aside one or two cents which are wrapped in a clean piece of cloth and from each house an offering of food is made. Vedi Yaka is the spirit they look to for help in getting game. When an animal is killed the heart is taken and roasted and offered on a stick with the end split into four to hold the heart under a tree." Commenting on this Mr B. Horsburgh writes, "Adukganna Hulawali Yaka is the spirit of a Vedda who was killed by King Mahasena for refusing to leave Minneriya tank when he was going to restore it. The name Adukganna Hulawaliyaka means Hulawali Yaka who takes the *adukkuwa* or present of food (from the offering made to him). He is only seen in dreams,

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

the work with songs, so as to get up a certain degree of excitement, necessary to carry them through the task. A song is chanted, and a little honey sprinkled for the spirits, before the combs are cut off the rock[1]."

Fig. 12.
Masliya × $\frac{1}{10}$.

Before honey collecting as many pots as possible are made and old pots and gourds are overhauled. The wooden sword which Nevill mentions is probably the *masliya* (fig. 12). This is a stout stick about 2½ metres long with four prongs at one end, which the Vedda carries hanging by a loop from his forearm and which he uses to detach the comb and convey it into the vessel called a *maludema* in which the honey is collected. This is also carried hanging from the forearm and should be made of deer's hide so that it may not be broken against the rocks as the honey collector swings to and fro. Plate LXV shows a *maludema* collected at Sitala Wanniya. An arrow is also carried and is largely used in detaching the combs from the rock.

Before taking the honey a bundle of green leaves is set alight and lowered in order to stupefy the bees. The smoker is called *odiya* (Sin. *hula*) and the creeper attached to it *yotwella*[2]. Several men of the community join together to collect rock-honey, the whole spoil being equally divided without any special consideration for the owner of the land, though it seemed that the owner would decide when the honey should be collected. The women accompany their men to crags and gulleys where the *bambara* build their combs. They hold torches and sing while the honey is being collected.

Plate LXVI shows a gourd, used as a hive for a colony of the stingless bee, hanging outside one

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 190.

[2] For the use of these see Chapter IV where the pantomime of honey getting is described.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Plate LXVI

●231

Gourd used as bee hive (Henebedda)

[facing p. 328]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

of the huts in the Morane chena settlement at Henebedda. It was shown us with pride by Handuna who said he was keeping it for his twelve year old son. He told us that in the old days the hollow branches, the homes of colonies of these bees, were frequently kept in the rock-shelters.

The ladder with the help of which *bambara* honey is collected consists of a greatly elongated loop of cane, apparently derived from a species of *Calamus*, across which rungs of creeper are stretched. In Plate LV (p. 290) there can be seen the bottom of the ladder some fifty feet long, used for training the young, hung from the top of the cliff across the face of the rock mass at Sitala Wanniya. In spite of the fact that honey is usually gathered at night the Veddas do not travel or hunt at night and know only two stars by name. One of these is a star or more probably a planet which often appears close to the moon and is called *pantaru* which, we were told, is the name by which the Sinhalese know it. The other named star appears soon after sunset, always in the same place and before the other stars, and is almost certainly Venus; this is called *irabada tarua*, i.e. "side of sun star." Although the Veddas hunt in the dusk of the dawn the idea that anyone would roam about at night seemed absolutely ludicrous to them (Sitala Wanniya), they roared with laughter at it, "why should one go into the jungle? it would be too dark to see to shoot, besides bears are about, absurd idea," they laughed again, in fact it was quite ten minutes before Kaira had forgotten the joke.

MASTICATORIES.

All Veddas chew eagerly, but as they can rarely obtain a supply of areca nuts they commonly use instead of these the bark of the *demata* tree (*Gmelina asiatica*) and the *dawata* tree (*Carallia integerrima*). Concerning the other plants that they use as masticatories Nevill says, "They occasionally chew the leaves of several aromatic herbs, particularly *Anisochilus suffruticosus*, a sort of sage that grows on rocks. The areca does not grow wild in the Eastern Province, but Veddas are very fond of the seeds of the lakada bush, *Gardenia carinata*, a

2: Bailey G-5 (ca, 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

439 now, nor have they been for very long, so shy as to be prevented from bartering freely enough with the Singhalese, although, unless for the purpose of barter, they avoid intercourse with strangers. Their wants, however, are so few, that they rarely emerge from their forests.

224 411 They have the reputation of being expert with bow and arrow, and as it is only the larger game, such as elk, deer, etc., which they pursue, it is very probable that with their remarkable power of creeping stealthily through the jungle, they may be able to come upon their prey unawares and do execution. But they are miserable shots at a mark. I never saw more than two 411 decent hits made at several small "archery meetings," which I have, from time to time, got up for my own amusement and their pecuniary advantage. And with regard to the latter, I must con- [177] fess that I never saw that contempt for money which Tennent supposes is still existing.*

The practice of drawing the bow with the feet to which Tennent also alludes as still in use, has so long ceased, that in all my inquiries—and I was very particular on this point—I could not find a single Veddah who ever witnessed it, but it is undoubted that such a mode of archery once existed, as is traditional among them.†

224 231 They have dogs perfectly trained to follow up and pull down the wounded deer. These they value highly; but they are of no distinct breed and do not differ from the ordinary country dogs. But it would appear that at a time when hunting was of more importance to them than it is now, the dog was more valued. Knox tells us, that dogs were given "for portions with their daughters in marriage;"‡ and Percival relates, that "before the last war broke out between us and Holland, a Dutch officer sold a couple of Weddah dogs at Surat, for 400 rix dollars, about £30."§

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them not, they will do him a mischief one time or another by shooting in the night. If the smith make the arrows, he leaves them in the same place where the Veddahs hung the flesh." Knox, part iii, chap. i, p. 62. *Vide* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 440, and note; also vol. i, part. v, chap. ii, p. 568, 2nd edition.

* "Money to them is worthless." *Vide* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 440, 2nd edit. I had been told that they would refuse silver, not knowing what it was, and would accept copper. But I never had a rupee refused when I tendered it; and the word "rupee" is by no means unintelligible to them. A good many years ago, I can well believe money was worthless to them, but that was long before Tennent's time.

† Tennent, vol. ii, part iv, chap. iii, p. 439. Some wild Veddahs of the Batticaloa district shewed Mr. Birch, when making some inquiries among them at my request, how the bow was drawn with the foot, but said it was never so drawn now.

‡ Knox, part iii, chap. i. § Percival, chap. xiii.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

But dogs are still prized by the Veddah. Of all his possessions, he values most his bow, which is placed under his head when he sleeps; and next in his estimation is the dog who guards it, sleeping always at his master's head. "What would you do," I asked a Veddah once, "if your bow were stolen?" "No one could steal it," he replied; "the dog would not let him." "But if any one killed your dog." His answer was significant. He clutched his axe, and made a motion as though he would cut down the man who did so.

And this was no idle threat. In 1849, a Bintenne Veddah deliberately knocked a man's brains out, for having, as he believed, killed two of his dogs by magic.* He never attempted to deny what he had done. "It is true," he said at the coroner's inquest, "I killed him, and I did so because he had killed, by witchcraft, the two dogs I had reared and hunted with for my support." He added, as quite a secondary justification, that the murdered man had also practised his magic arts on himself. He detailed, with great minuteness, how he lay wait for him, and how, while he, with his wife and child, was resting in the shade, he watched his opportunity, and felled him with a club: and—strong evidence of the proverbial truthfulness of the Veddahs—he described how, by his influence (he was the head man of one of the small tribes), he intimidated the widow and father of his victim, and so kept the murder secret for some days.

None but the woman saw the deed; and had falsehood been the normal characteristic of the Veddahs, as I fear it is with too many of their more civilized compatriots, he would probably have escaped punishment. He was tried and convicted of murder, but the sentence of death was commuted to several years imprisonment. It was hoped that, having received some instructions in goal, he might carry back with him some little civilization to his own people.

But imprisonment was to him a greater punishment than death. He pined away in confinement, and was released to save his life. I have often seen him in Bintenne. Civilization has not done much for him. He differs from his brethren only in having acquired a taste for jewelry, for he wears with apparent pride, a tawdry brass chain round his waist.

The Veddahs eat the flesh of elk,† deer, monkeys, pigs, the iguano, and pengolin—all flesh, indeed, but that of oxen, elephants,

* The murdered man was not a Veddah, but a low-country vagrant; several of whom have, of late years, taken up their abode near the Bintenne Veddahs, to their great annoyance.

† What is commonly termed an elk in Ceylon, is the Samba deer (*rusa Aristotelis*).

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

262 bears, leopards, and jackals; and all birds, except the wild or domestic fowl. They will not touch lizards, bats, or snakes.*

They can assign no reason for their abstinence from the flesh of those beasts and birds which I have enumerated, but their objection to beef and fowls, though quite unexplained is decidedly the most marked, so much so that during my inquiries, I found that they spontaneously expressed their antipathy, though it required cross-examination to elicit the fact that they also avoid the other kinds of flesh.

They do not scruple to eat animals which have died a natural death, and have (in common with the Kandyans) a decided preference for their game "high"—if so mild a term can describe the exceedingly advanced condition, in which venison should be to suit the palate of a Veddah (or Kandyan) epicure.

226 They are fond of fish, which they catch by mixing with the water the juice of particular fruits and barks of trees, which stupify them. A similar practice is common among the Singhalese.

224 Their arrows procure for them the flesh of the animals they eat, and I can find no trace of pit-falls or traps being in use among 231 them. In Bintenne, some of them employ the hunting buffalo to enable them to approach their game unseen.† Their dogs track out the wounded animals, and are also trained to catch the iguano.

223 Tennent is wrong in saying that they procure birds with the bow. They are not good enough shots for that. They catch [824] them with bird-lime, made from the juice of the bo-tree (*ficus religiosa*)—and also watch them to their nests, and take them at night. Their skill as marksmen is most indifferent, and they never exercise it at small objects.

224 The most choice food, in their estimation, is, of land animals, the flesh of the pengolin, or of the iguano; and, of fish, the eel. [262] Though they eat no part of the elephant, yet he is the object of their pursuit, both for their own protection and on account of [439] the ivory, so valuable to them as an article of barter. They will steal up to an elephant, and, as he is in the act of stepping for-

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* It is curious that, while in the Batticaloa district Veddahs are said to eat bats, those of the Badulla district—certainly of Nilgala—reject them.

† The use of the hunting buffalo is common all over the Island. The manner in which the animal is trained is curious. When its horns are young and tender, a string is tied tightly round the base of one of them. The pain thus produced is so acute, that the poor animal is easily guided by the cord, and answers to the slightest touch. The ligature is gradually relaxed; and, when the buffalo is full grown, the recollection of the pain it occasioned is so vivid that he will answer readily to a thin string tied loosely to his horn. With an animal so trained, the hunter can easily approach the deer unseen at night. The buffalo feeds; the hunter crouches under his lee; a touch will guide him, and the hunter advances under cover.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

Equally they were acquainted with tobacco and betel, for I was shown a place where the Veddas established a toll that was paid usually in these particular commodities. 276 [651]

The dog was the only domestic animal reared by the Vedda, and special names were given to these pets. 231 552

The Veddas appeared to have no knowledge of melting iron for the manufacture of their particular implements, which consisted of the bow and arrow, the spear, and the small axe, or hatchet. Arrow and spear-heads were procured by barter; the method of procedure was to clear a small space round the foot of a tree by the wayside leading to a village known to contain smiths. Here the Vedda would hang up to the branch of a tree a vessel containing honey, or a piece of meat, which would be taken by the smith, who in return would hang up an arrow-head. 411 412 326 439

It was understood by both that the quantity or number of articles required would be represented by the number of parcels of meat or honey. Should the smith, however, take the meat and not leave the arrow-heads that were thus silently requisitioned, he would pay the penalty with his life, or some of his animals would be shot by the defrauded Vedda. [628]

The bow was usually made from the wood of the Dunumadala (*Stereospermum chelonioides*) and of the Bignoniaceæ. It was not always of the same length, as this appears to have depended on the springiness of the wood. The arrow was generally about 4 ft. long, or as much as a man could draw the bow to. The arrow-head appears to have been small, large arrow-heads being for ceremonial purposes only. 411 [824]

Fire was obtained by spinning, under moderate pressure, a vertical rod of Welanga wood (*Pterospermum suberifolium*) on a flat piece of wood of the same species, with the point of the former surrounded by floss, or some quickly inflammable material. Later, the flint and steel were found more effective. One example of a flint and steel was shown to me at Panawa, and I tried to purchase it at the owner's valuation, but I found he was most reluctant to sell. I understood that the flint and steel, a lock of hair, and a fragment of cloth represented a title deed, these being given by a dying man to his heir, or adopted heir, as a mode or evidence of transfer. 372 [824] 423 428

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
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than in densely populated areas, where the individuality of the creature is lost in environmental immensity. In the one case he and his are known, in the other he and they are but a fraction.

Considerations of space preclude my enlarging on this subject, or describing in detail the individual conditions of the different villages that I explored, but I venture to think that a careful examination of local factors would throw much light on the evolution of the race from its early stages of primitive existence to its present state of partial civilization.

Domestic Animals.—These consist of cattle, buffaloes, goats, dogs, cats, and fowls.

Black cattle are abundant in all the inhabited parts of the country I explored, and naturally more so where the opportunities for trade in them exists than in very isolated places. Milk is nearly always procurable, but I heard of no instance of children being exclusively reared upon cow milk. Buffaloes are, where possible, reared for agricultural purposes, and also for the supply of milk, which is often turned into a form of junket that is in much demand.

In one village in the Panawa Pattu I found a Tamil man owning a large herd of buffaloes, and to my surprise I found that he called them by individual names, the animals responding to his call.

I was informed that quite a large proportion of the domesticated buffaloes were half-breeds between the wild and the tame. This may explain why the Vedda-country animal is so much larger than the buffalo of, say, the Western Province.

Goats are rare, and only occur where there are Tamil or Moorish people. I met with them occasionally, but nowhere away from the influences above mentioned. Pigs, except wild, I never met with. Dogs are plentiful, and of a much superior build and type to the village pariah of the civilized country. This is doubtless due to the care the real Vedda has bestowed upon this animal from the earliest time. In point of size the dogs of the Vedda country are large, powerfully built, and bold. Black and white, or brown and white, are the usual colours of these animals. Cats are, generally speaking, scarce, though I remarked at Kumana that while I only saw one dog, I found six cats in that little village.

Si Spittel D-8 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX8 Vedda AX8

We had hardly gained the base of the rock when we heard human voices and soon came up with three men and their dogs. One fellow carried a gun, the others had axes hitched to their shoulders. They were on their way to a devil dancing ceremony at a house of illness some miles away; but abandoning their project they accompanied us to their homes.

In a small clearing stood half a dozen leafy shelters. Outside one of these, three women with infants at the breast were seated roasting small yellow flowers. The rest of their people were at work on a *chena** close by. We summoned them and soon we had all the Veddas of the *Kougaha Ulpotta* before us—some six or eight men and about a dozen women and children. They were a poor lot bearing the stigmata of malaria and framboesia. There was but one old man among them. The children were emaciated and languid.

Most of them showed strong traces of Tamil admixture, especially the women; what poor ornaments they wore, their clothing, and even their very names were Tamil; and so were their predilections if the coy smiles one or two of them bestowed on the fine Tamil that accompanied us signified anything. There were at least three men, however, true to Vedda type—short of stature, wild-eyed, with beardless face and up-standing frizzly hair.

They had no bows among them, except as playthings for the children, but made us one as a memento and stained it with charcoal and *thimbiri* to give it the appearance of use.

The huts were fashioned of wattle and leaves, and thatched with dry grass. Their domestic appointments comprised earthen pots, a wooden pestle and mortar, bark rope, and a deer skin or two.

Fruits, flowers, wild yams, honey, the flesh of animals, *kurrukkan*† and maize formed their food. The meat they fancied most was that of the langur and monitor lizard which they hunted with the lazy mongrels that loitered about. They eat abundantly and at any hour when food is plentiful; but as a rule one good meal a day is all they expect; in times of dearth they bear hunger stoically, chewing incessantly a few varieties of bark they carry in pouches fashioned of cloth saturated with melted wax (*ites rekhe*). Partial nomads, they spend many months of the year under trees and in caves. Where the *palu*, *veera*, *kong*, or *mora*‡ fruit is ripe, where the hives are, there they take their women and children, dogs, and chattels and go.

"How often do you bathe?" I asked one of them, the smell of their ring-wormed bodies suggesting little acquaintance with water.

"What bathing for us," he replied. "We fall into a stream once in a way and get out again; that is our bath. And we only do that when our stomachs are full. When we are hungry we don't care for anything; we can eat even a man then!"

In answer to the question how they measured distances and what constituted a mile, the reply was, "We walk till our legs hurt, then we place our axes on the ground, sit down, take out our pouches, and chew a quid; that is our mile".

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*A patch of forest cleared for cultivation

†*Eleusine coracana*

‡*Mimusops hexandra*, *Hemicyclia sepiaria*, *Schleichera trijuga*, *Nephelium longana*, respectively.

5: Spittel II-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

were loath to purchase their intimacy with gifts. Time enough for that, when we had won them over by less humiliating means. Besides, these Veddas were evidently spoilt, and we wished to show them they were not the important personages they imagined themselves to be.

"We are going then," said Handuna. It was now our turn for dejection. Was it for such an ungracious issue we had travelled so far?

I had a last card, having brought some neosalvarsan, a sovereign remedy for yaws so rife among these people. The offer was received with indifference. There was only one case among them, they said, and the patient was too ill to come. This being just what we wanted, I offered to visit them the next morning.

"You cannot come where we live unless we allow you," said the irrepressible Kaira. "And we won't show you our caves or anything, unless you give us presents."

Sick with exasperation and disgust at the behaviour of these impossible children, I told them they could take our offer or leave it as they chose, and turned to other work. The result was a grudging acquiescence; and, leaving a guide behind, they went away.

A word of explanation regarding the sophistication of a people so remote. They were in fact about the purest-blooded Veddas extant; indeed, it was to this very circumstance they owed their disappointing behaviour; for it had attracted Seligamann among them. What that implied may well be imagined. To obtain the valuable sociological information with which his book abounds, he had gained the confidence of these folk with scrupulous consideration and kindness, showering on them gifts of all kinds. Moreover, the patient investigation of the most intimate details of their lives by such a man, heightened their self-esteem. Of this we had an amusing illustration. I was obliged to admonish a group of Sinhalese that embarrassed us with their attentions. A Vedda sidled up and, tapping me familiarly on the shoulder, whispered, "Those people don't like us, they are jealous of us. We and you gentlemen are one; they are different!"

To dismiss these Veddas as spoilt uninteresting folk would imply failure to discern their innate simplicity, beneath the veneer of pose and importunity, for which contact with an indulgent stranger had been responsible. In their homes they still are as artless as their forbears were before ever white man set foot on these shores.

We were out hunting early that afternoon, when a sudden snapping sound arrested our attention. The Vedda we were with listened a few seconds. "Catching *talagoyas*," (monitor-lizards), he said laconically. The excited barking of a dog and rebuking human voices soon confirmed his conjecture. Going up, we found two men, one of whom carried a large quivering monitor just killed; while two dogs, still spirited with the chase, danced round their victim and growled and snapped at us. One of the men now set about to disjoint the quarry's tail at the middle, leaving it connected only by a tag of sinew; then, slitting the submandibular web, he rove the tail through till it locked at the division, making the reptile eat its own tail as it were, and carried it neatly in a loop. The monitor is best hunted at high noon; after four in the afternoon it takes to trees and holes.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

136 The grass in the glades was so tall that it covered us entirely. One's only chance of encountering game lay at the forest margins, or in the infrequent patches of burnt ground, overspread with the tender spicous shoots of which the chital are fond. Parrots and doves broke the stillness of the evening with their crooning. Startled quails whirred from our feet crying vociferous caution to their crouching young, and sometimes we would flush a *pathan kukula*, a species of partridge. But the note that accorded most with the brooding genius of the place, was the mournful, incessant 'ho-ho, ho-ho' of the *botua-kopan*, a cuckoo which, try as we might, we failed to see.

361 The next morning, provided with a small langur we shot on the way, we visited the Henebedde Veddas in their homes. Handuna's hut 231 stood at the foot of a densely wooded hill. There were a few cattle about which the Veddas tended for a consideration from the Sinhalese; and, what was even more unexpected, we found here a couple of hens with excellent broods; for, even the Sinhalese of these parts, as we learnt to our cost, kept no fowls. In these pursuits lie the nuclei that bid fair to tie nomadic hunters to fixed abodes.

342 Handuna's hut was a long low structure of wattle and bast thatched with straw, and partitioned into three or four dark rooms, occupied by [281 his family and those of his sons-in-law. At one end of the building was an 362] open living-room in which we were entertained with deer skins for seats. Slung from the eaves, at the other end of the hut, was a gourd, the mouth 231 of which was plugged with wax pierced with two small holes, through which bees busily entered and emerged. As I focussed my camera on this interesting example of Vedda apiculture, the enterprising showman naively remarked that a gentleman had once given him a rupee for that picture; but he might have spared the hint for the good it brought him.

343 Standing a little apart from the main hut, was a squat, kennel-like [841] structure for the segregation of women, during their monthly indis- [171] position. This feature is universal among jungle folk, whether Vedda, half-Vedda, Sinhalese, or Tamil. These sheds, barely sufficient for an individual to sit or lie crouched in, are often overgrown by jungle, and only crudely protected with bark-slats or deer skins; they have a fire-place at the open entrance; sometimes they are more hygienically built over trestles. Considering the poor protection they afford, and their nearness to the forest around, it must require some fortitude on the part of those occupying them, especially at night.

252 We now saw the monkey we had brought prepared for food. A slow fire was kindled in the garden; on this the carcase was placed, and turned over until well singed, emitting a most appetising odour. The smooth stone on which Handuna had up to now been seated, and which did service as seat or platter as occasion demanded, was requisitioned; the half-roasted animal was placed on it, disemboweled, and quartered with the blade of an arrow. A dog, that had been awaiting the opportunity, feasted on the offal in full view. The head was severed and split in half, [824 the limbs, dismembered, and the trunk broken flat. The various frag- 264] ments were then put back to roast. When all was ready, dainty morsels were served out to us on broad *kenda** leaves (the usual plates of these 262 people), with the polite request that we must eat first. A fragment of liver done to a turn, and a dainty hand with the charred little fingers

*Macaranga tomentosa.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

2. YAKKURE

This be the verse you grave for me;
Here he lies where belonged to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

R. L. STEVENSON

THROUGH a lush meadow studded with fragrant wood-apple, we entered Kalukolu Eba a hamlet of some twenty huts nestling in the picturesque dishabille of a *chena* rank with maize, vegetables and chillies. Here as elsewhere in the Vanni there was much evidence of parangi (framboesia). Fully three-fourths of the people showed active or quiescent traces of the disease. A boy had a necklace of loathsome papules; a woman covered with nodes in practically every bone of her body was boiling a decoction of dry leaves as a salve; another was stewing monitor flesh in chilli-water.

The first sign of our nearness to Yakkure was a cattle-penstamped clean, where half a dozen boys were securing cows and yearlings for the night. Scratching around the stockade with the tameness of domestic fowls were a jungle cock and his dames, and from every side came the jerky cries of wild chanticleers. A cairn of tumbled stones marked the site of an old *vihare*. Blue in the distance, across a wide lagoon bordered with sedge, lotus and dead trees, stood the long rock called Gunner's Quoin, with a bare patch, high on its tree-mantled flank, pointed out to us as the Maraweethiya, a historic cave.

Yakkure itself was a negligently palisaded hamlet nestling ina grove of tamarinds, in full view of a beautiful tank. We were unfortunate in our choice of a camping place. Five days of seclusion in the forest had made us forget that the immediate proximity to a village always meant flies, smells, and embarrassing attentions from forward men and coy but curious women. There were other draw-backs too. At sunset, from a pool near by, came a low, ominous hum auguring ill for our night's rest. We lit fires, bestowed meticulous care on bed curtains, and bedaubed ourselves with mosquitol. The lapwing's desolate cry, the doleful music of water fowl, the booming of great owls, the distant trumpeting of elephants, and more than all, the baffled mosquito murmur around, soon lulled me to sleep. But my companion who had failed to stop up betimes several holes in his curtain, the inside of which was found at dawn to be plastered with a blood-sodden host, tells a different story!

Three miles from Yakkure are the well-known falls of the Mahaweli. At flood-time their thunder is heard at the village. Once in a decade the waters creep up to and submerge the huts, sending the people up trees, and their cattle into the forest to be drowned or killed by leopards. With a *kapua* (priest) for guide, for the place is held eerie, we set out to visit the falls. Skirting an ancient aqueduct (*yoda ella*) which tapped the river a mile above the falls, we came to open jungle bordering the banks, that allowed us free passage through its colonnades of giant

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

cries he had rushed in vain to the rescue. It speaks much for the dominance of man over animals that this puny fellow, armed only with a small hatchet, could live with impunity in such surroundings; and moreover leave his wife and children unprotected in their fragile leaf-hut while he was out in quest of food.

"Cha," I heard Sinna ruminating sorrowfully to himself, "the *gos*-catching dog is gone."

"Have you no other?" I asked.

"The one that's left isn't much good," he said. "With the bitch I lost I could catch six *goyas** a day."

The way to the caves was up the heavily-wooded, boulder-encumbered side of the hill, plentiful with caves of bear, porcupine and wild cat. On the sandy floor of one dark den were the footprints of a bear and her cubs that had just vacated it. Sinna was well ahead of us, as we clambered on trembling knees regardless of all else but where to gain foot-hold, when a timorous one called out to the Vedda from below, "There now, if a bear should come, don't you run away and climb a tree."

The little chap wagged his head acquiescingly. I asked him what he would do in such an event.

"We will also strike; he will also bite," was the cool reply.

Gaining a spur, at length we attained the first of the series of caves known as the Maraweethiya. A strong aroma of bats greeted us. Ant-hills grew out of the dusty floor of the cave, the plastered dome of which was ornamented with frescoes of Buddhas and *devas*. A decayed wooden image stood behind a flat altar stone supported on bricks, many of which lay fallen about. A broken wall partially shut in the cave, and another divided it off from a deep pool of crystalline water.

From here a passage protected by a low wall led through a narrow gulley flanked by small trees; thence by way of spurs, tunnels and deep grottoes we came to a shallow cave in full face of the sky, where we were the cause of much concern to a pair of peregrine falcons. They hovered above us crying perturbedly; now they would swoop boldly down almost within reach of our hands; now wing away with harsh cackling cries of alarm, as they discovered us handling their eggs, that lay amidst the debris of brick and tile.

Ahead was a fearsome pass, which we must negotiate to reach the last of the caves. It was no more than a shallow, sloping notch in the sheer side of the rock, overlooking a drop of about three hundred feet, and with seemingly nothing beyond it but eternity. On hands and knees we crawled through and were mightily relieved to find ourselves in the security of a large grotto. Here, before two patched stone images, we found a few of our carriers devoutly kneeling; on an altar-stone were their meagre oblations of ixora blooms they had gathered on the way. The virtue, it would seem, lay less in the quality of the offerings than in the attainment of this inhospitable shrine with its weathered and lonely gods.

We could go no farther; but hence along the crazy edge of the hill was the merest semblance of a break-neck way that led, we were told, to the ancient kingdom of the *rakshayas* (demons) with its foot-wide

*Monitor lizard